



## EXERCISE DAWN BLITZ IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HONES RAPID CRISIS RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

On Wednesday, September 28, CH-53E Super Stallions and V-22 Ospreys of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466 came aboard the USS Bonhomme Richard to participate in Exercise Dawn Blitz, an exercise designed to prepare Marine units for rapid crisis response. The Marine Corps utilizes these unique aircraft for numerous missions of shape and scale, from amphibious assault



operations to disaster response. "We provide a lot of different things for troops – from insertion, evacuation, medical supplies, food, transport cargo, artillery and vehicles," said Lance Cpl. Steven J. Rader, a crew chief with HMH-466, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. While Dawn Blitz will provide Marines with crisis response training, it's also an opportunity for aircraft crews to conduct and get more familiar with landing and take-off exercises. Cpl. Ben Kramer, an aviation ordnance technician with HMH-466, said that familiarizing themselves with amphibious operations is just as important as flight training, as life on a ship is vastly different to life on shore. "A lot of these guys have never been on a boat before.... I know when I first got on a ship it was a whole new world," said Kramer. "I just hope this mentally prepares them for the amount of time they'll spend on a boat. I think the mental aspect is huge."

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## HEROES

### MARINE RECEIVES SILVER STAR



During a ceremony in Camp Lejeune, N.C., on Sept. 28, Capt. Timothy R. Sparks was awarded the Silver Star Medal, the third-highest military award for valor. According to the citation, Sparks exhibited conspicuous gallantry in Afghanistan while in support of Operation Moshtarak with his unit, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. On Feb. 13, 2010, after finding his company surrounded by Taliban, Sparks led his men through heavy fighting, expanding the unit's control of the region in spite of the severe opposition and the fire coming in from all sides.

"We did this together as a team, so being singled out as one person for a team accomplishment is really a humbling experience," he said. Division Commander Brig. Gen. Walter Miller presented Sparks with the award and said he was honored to be doing so.

Before Miller adjourned the ceremony, the troops stood attention for the Division anthem: "Follow me ... What the heck, Leatherneck, follow me."

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## COMMANDANT PINS PURPLE HEART IN AFGHANISTAN



During a Sept. 23 ceremony at Camp Bastion, Afghanistan, Sgt. Tyler J. Andreatta was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries he sustained during combat by Gen. James F. Amos, 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps. Andreatta is an avionics and weapons technician with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267.

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## N.C. MARINE HONORED IN AFGHANISTAN AS A TRUE LEADER, MENTOR, FRIEND

Cpl. Michael Dutcher was described as kind, passionate, resourceful, knowledgeable, humble and brave by those who were in attendance to his memorial service. Dutcher, a team leader for 1st Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, was killed in action Sept. 15, while on patrol in Sangin, Afghanistan. "Cpl. Dutcher had one mission and one mission only: make his platoon better no matter what he had to do," said said 1st Lt. Charles Poulton. "Cpl. Dutcher had no ego to feed, no desire to seek credit for a job well done; only a strong desire to have his platoon succeed." Dutcher lived and died selflessly for those he loved and served with to ensure they made it home. It was a pure love that others emulated and admired him for.

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## NEWS

# CORPS INSTALLATIONS FALL UNDER A NEW COMMAND



According to the Marine Administration Message 575/11, the Marine Corps has a new centralized command system for its regional commands. In effect Oct. 1, the new command was activated, and there will be an activation ceremony during the General Officer Symposium on Oct. 12. Marine Corps Installations Command (MCICOM) is the single authority for all Marine Corps Installations matters and has command and control of three subordinate regional commands: Marine Corps Installations East, Marine Corps Installations West and Marine Corps Installations Pacific. The activation of the new command comes in response to a review group ordered by the Commandant of the Marine Corps in 2010

to study the roles and responsibilities of the Marine Corps and the structure necessary to support those ends.

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## NEW SGT. MAJ. OF THE ARMED FORCES

On Friday, Sept. 30, Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey administered the oath of office to Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Bryan B. Battaglia to serve as his senior enlisted advisor, just hours after taking the oath of office himself to become the 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "[He] is the right guy, at the right place, at the right time," Dempsey said of Battaglia, who will serve as the principal military advisor to the chairman and to Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta. Dempsey commended Battaglia for his reputation as an advocate for junior Marines and welcomed his wealth of experience as a "combat-tested veteran." Battaglia, described as "one who will tell you straight up what you need to know," said that as Dempsey's enlisted advisor, he plans to let his actions speak for him. "Rather than stand before you today and go through a lineage of promises or job descriptions of what I can do ... actions speak louder than words," he said. Battaglia becomes just the





second noncommissioned officer to hold the position, which struck a chord with Dempsey who said, "I'm here today because of the support and guidance that I received from noncommissioned officers. I had a great education at West Point, and I had a great group of officer mentors through the years. But whenever I look back at the moments of greatest learning in my career, there was generally a noncommissioned officer in there someplace."

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## MIND FITNESS ROUTINES FIGHT COMBAT STRESS

As part of an effort to improve resilience throughout service and stave off post-traumatic stress among those who work in dangerous or demanding environments, the Marine Corps has created a new program called Mind Fitness. According to the Marine Corps Times, this program relies on a regimen of meditation-like exercises believed to alter the brain by strengthening the areas that help us keep focus and cope with stress. Through an eight-week guided course consisting of



several classes that force Marines to address topics such as anger, sadness and fear, students are taught a slew of mental and physical exercises they are expected to continue on their own. "Just like physical exercise changes our body, our muscles, our cardiovascular system, ... if we do these exercises that train our attention and concentration, we are beginning to rewire the brain," said Elizabeth Stanley, a Georgetown University professor and former Army intelligence officer and the creator of the program.

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## HARRIERS ESSENTIAL TO EXPEDITIONARY OPS



The AV-8B Harrier has proven to be an invaluable asset to Marine Attack Squadron 214, providing capabilities that the 31st Marine



Expeditionary Unit (MEU) would not have without the aircraft. VMA-214 utilize the short take off, vertical landing (STOVL) helicopters to enact long range strikes and gather real-time reconnaissance footage. This STOVL capability is completely unique to this aircraft -- six of which are currently at the disposal of VMA-214 -- and it serves a vital

role to the 31st MEU. The 31st MEU is aboard the Amphibious Assault Ship USS Essex (LHD 2), whose flight deck length is approximately 200 feet shorter than the average Nimitz-class aircraft carrier. Since the Harrier does not require the same assistance during takeoff and landing, it allows the 31st MEU to maintain fixed wing aircraft while at sea. "The unique capabilities of VMA 214 are vital to the successful operation of the 31st MEU as a force in the Asia-Pacific region," said Col. Andrew R. MacMannis, the commanding officer of the 31st MEU. "There is no replacement and we cannot accomplish all of our mission essential tasks without the fixed wing capabilities they bring."

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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY SAVES MARINE LIVES



At the Modern Day Marine Military Exposition at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. Vendors displayed products, a portion of which were geared toward the expeditionary energy initiatives of the Corps. Since 2006, the Marine Corps has funded research into numerous products that not only decrease reliance on natural resources, but more importantly, save deployed Marine lives. Dean Fuller, National Solar Technologies sales engineer, said the Marine Corps has employed his company's

solar powered lighting systems and solar/wind-power systems for five years now. Portable

street lighting, which is used in many deployed camps, runs completely on solar energy, allowing them to function without fuel. "When the insurgents would cut the power and try to attack us, these lights would stay on," Fuller said. He also said NST went on to bulletproof the light fixtures by making the bulb casings thicker. For Marine Corps officials, saving the planet and the government's money pales in comparison to saving the lives of Marines in deployed situations. Solar technology experts foresee a significant increase in the utilization of and continued research on solar products for the Marine Corps.

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## FAMILY MATTERS BLOG: KEEPING RELATIONSHIPS HEALTHY



In a recent post in the "Family Matters Blog," Dr. Kate McGraw, from the Defense Centers of Excellence, talks about the challenges and stressors military couples face. In addition, she offers her professional advice and teaches couples how to overcome these trying obstacles. "Ask your partner what he (or she) needs. Also, you should be able to identify what you need and how your needs can be met. If you both develop empathy for each other's needs, than you both will be satisfied with what you can create together in your relationship,"

McGraw writes. She asks everyone to be alert for signs of traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder and encourages people to seek professional help if there are suicidal thoughts or depression.

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## MARINE CORPS HERITAGE FOUNDATION ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS FOR ANNUAL AWARDS



The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation (MCHF) is now accepting submissions for its annual Awards Program.



From Active Duty and retired Marines to civilians, the

Awards Program draws entries from a broad spectrum of individuals interested in portraying or recognizing some aspect of Marine life, culture, history or work. "Our annual awards ceremony is a wonderful way to spotlight the creative achievements of civilians and Marines alike," said LtGen Robert R. Blackman, Jr., president and CEO of the MCHF. "The Foundation deeply appreciates all those who work to advance and preserve Marine Corps history, traditions and culture, and encourages individuals to submit their own work or submit work on behalf of others." For a detailed list of the awards and the submissions requirements, please visit: [www.marineheritage.org](http://www.marineheritage.org).

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## **DID YOU KNOW?**

### **CHILDREN'S ARTWORK FOR WOUNDED MARINES**



The National Museum of the Marine Corps (NMMC) is sponsoring the collection of children's art, which will be distributed to hospitals throughout the world by the Wounded Warrior Regiment. Children interested in participating should use a 8 ½ X 11 sheet of paper to create a message and a picture for a service member. Children may draw, color, or paint

their picture. All artwork should be sent in a flat, rigid envelope and post-marked by December 10, 2011. In addition, each paper needs to include the name, hometown and grade level of the artist.

Submit the artwork by mail to:  
The National Museum of the Marine Corps  
Attn : Teacher in Residence  
18900 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Triangle, VA 22172-1938

**Learn more about the NMMC**



## EVENTS

### MARINE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION LOOKS TO SET FUNDRAISING RECORD



The 13th Annual Carolina Classic Golf Tournament will be hosted by the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation and will be held on Oct. 22 and 23 at Cherry Point Air Station, N.C., and Camp Lejeune Paradise Point golf courses, N.C. Although the foundation is national, it provides more scholarships for Marines and families in North Carolina than anywhere else in the country. "This year alone there were \$500,000 in scholarships," said Dianne Powell, lead fundraiser in the North Carolina area. Since its inception, this two-day golf tournament has raised more than \$1 million for the foundation. The Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation has given away millions, and it gives \$10,000 scholarships to families or children of those killed in action

representing any branch of service, said Powell. The recipients are selected by committee from those who qualify. Any child of a Marine can apply. The tournament committee is always seeking additional volunteers to help organize the tournament. Those interested in volunteering may contact [carolinaclassic@mcsf.org](mailto:carolinaclassic@mcsf.org).

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